TENNESSEE

State Plan for the
Technology Access Program

Program Years
2005-2008

Virginia T. Lodge, Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Human Services

State: TENNESSEE

Table of Contents

Part I: Attachments
OMB Control Number: 1820-0664
Expiration Date: 10/31/2008

Attachment 1: Basic Information

Name of Lead Agency:
      Tennessee Department of Human Services

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Lead Agency:
      Division of Rehabilitation Services

Address of Lead Agency:
      400 Deaderick Street, 15th Floor
      Nashville, TN 37248

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency:
      Virginia T. Lodge, Commissioner

Address for Certifying Representative:
      Commissioner's Office
      400 Deaderick Street, 15th Floor
      Nashville, TN 37248-0001

Telephone for Certifying Representative:
      (615) 313-4700

E-mail for Certifying Representative:
      Gina.Lodge@state.tn.us

Name and Title of Program Director:
      Kevin R. Wright, Executive Director

Address for Program Director:
      400 Deaderick Street, 14th Floor
      Nashville, TN 37248

Telephone for Program Director:
      (615) 313-5183

E-mail for Program Director:
      kevin.r.wright@state.tn.us

Name of Implementing Entity:
      Not Applicable

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Implementing Entity:
      Not Applicable

Address of Implementing Entity:
      Not Applicable

Name and Title of Program Director:
        Not Applicable

Address for Program Director:
        Not Applicable

Telephone for Program Director:
        Not Applicable

E-mail for Program Director:
        Not Applicable

Address of Implementing Entity:
Name and Title of Program Director:
        Not Applicable

Address for Program Director:
        Not Applicable

Telephone for Program Director:
        Not Applicable

E-mail for Program Director:
        Not Applicable

Attachment 2: Lead Agency and Implementing Entity

2.1   Identification and Description of the Lead Agency - Identify and describe the Lead Agency referred to in section 4(c)(1)(A) of the AT Act.

   2.1A   Identification and Description of Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is not Designated

   The Lead Agency responsible for implementing the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, is the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Within the Department of Human Services, the Division of Rehabilitation Services' (DRS) Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP) will directly administer the grant.   DRS and TTAP have a long-standing and respected history of providing a full range of employment and assistive technology related services to Tennesseans who experience all types of disabilities. DRS has the proven capacity to help improve the quality of life for thousands of Tennesseans as they seek greater independence in being employed, transitioning from school and living in their community of choice.

   DRS is divided into six sections including TTAP which has provided Tennesseans with disabilities of all ages and disability types from across the state with a coordinated and comprehensive system of assistive technology related services, awareness, advocacy and capacity building activities since inception in 1989. TTAP's network of assistive technology centers has built a solid basis for delivery of assistive technology services to many people with a wide range of disabilities for over fourteen years. Tennessee is a long state spanning two time zones and many miles from east to west in addition to a varied terrain including mountains, hills and flat land. By choosing a decentralized service delivery model, Tennessee citizens have the advantage of accessing technology services in their home communities where they have easier access to technology, services and people that they know.

   As an independent section within the Division, TTAP's decentralized service model provides a credible delivery system for our demonstration, loan, reutilization and training programs. Each of the five AT Centers is a 501C3 that can accept donated equipment from individuals and companies to leverage money from other sources and grants in order to support to community based activities and further stretch limited resources. This combination of funding streams insures a much more adequate supply of up to date material and trained staff to deliver a comprehensive network of services throughout Tennessee to individuals from infancy through their entire life span.

   TTAP is responsible for the daily management of five contracted assistive technology centers. TTAP and those centers have both the capacity and flexibility to serve individuals of all ages and locations statewide. That flexibility helps to ensure that TTAP retains its ability to be responsive and serve the wide range of assistive technology needs across many domains. In addition, each center as a not for profit community agency is required by TTAP's contract to have a board of directors that is comprised of at least 51% consumers or family members. TTAP in conjunction with the technology centers, located in Memphis, Jackson, Nashville, Chattanooga and

Knoxville, assists individuals with disabilities of all ages and types of disabilities and their family members acquire the devices that allow for more independence by providing information about the availability, acquisition and use of devices and services. That coordinated effort will ensure that those who live in both the rural and urban areas of all 95 counties have access to the services and information vital to their increased independence.

TTAP's director holds a bachelor of science degree and is both a consumer of assistive technology devices as well as a respected professional who has over ten years of experience in disability policy and grant management. The management staff at each of the technology centers are dedicated professionals whose academic credentials range from bachelors to doctorate degrees in education or other related fields. Additionally, the nearly 200 combined professional staff at the centers include rehabilitation specialists, technologists, rehabilitation engineers, speech and language pathologists and specialists in rehabilitation who have dedicated themselves to ensuring that everyone has access to the tools that they need to be independent.

In order to ensure that TTAP and its technology centers will meet federally mandated activities, serve the needs of the community, and remain consumer responsive, TTAP will hold annual forums across the state to gather information that will be used as part of strategic planning process. Those comments will then be provided to the TTAP Statewide Advisory Council and used when the Council reviews and updates the TTAP Plan.

Because DRS is also the Designated State Unit (DSU) for the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), TTAP and the technology centers will serve as a partner with these vital consumer directed organizations as they work toward their goals of supporting the employment and community living philosophy by promoting the inclusion of assistive technology as a tool for independence.

To better ensure the natural supports and funding for purchasing devices are available, TTAP works with various agencies organizations and funding resources to help them better understand assistive technology and the impact that the technology has on the lives of individuals with disabilities. Some of those natural supports include other state agencies that are responsible for providing assistive technology such as the Department of Education, Department of Health, local school systems and Tennessee's Medicaid program known as TennCare. In addition to state agencies, TTAP will continue to work with private companies and local governments like insurance companies, employers, businesses and city and county governments to help them better understand their roles and responsibilities in providing technology as part of their service delivery or in making their programs accessible.

TTAP also coordinates with the other sections of DRS to meet the assistive technology needs of Tennesseans with disabilities.   These other sections are: Vocational Rehabilitation Services; the Training Facilities Network; Services for the Blind and

Visually Impaired; Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Tennessee Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and Disability Determination Services.

2.1B <u>Identification and Description of the Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is Designated</u>

Not Applicable

2.2 <u>Identification and Description of the Implementing Entity</u> – Identify and describe the Implementing Entity referred to in section 4(c)(1)(B) of the AT Act, if such an Implementing Entity is designated by the Governor.

Not Applicable

2.3 <u>Show of Good Cause for Change in Lead Agency or Implementing Entity</u> – If the Governor has chosen to change the Lead Agency or, if applicable, Implementing Entity as allowed in section 4(c)(1)(C) of the AT Act, provide an explanation of good cause for this redesignation.

Not Applicable

Attachment 3: State Advisory Council

3.1 <u>Membership of the Advisory Council</u> - Identify the members of the Advisory Council and each member's designation as an individual with disabilities who uses AT, a family member or guardian of such individual, or a representative of a State agency or other entity.

On March 31, 2006 Tennessee Department of Human Services Commissioner Virginia T. Lodge appointed 17 consumers, agency representatives and state legislators to serve on the TTAP Statewide Advisory Council (SAC) pursuant to the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-364).

The SAC is a diverse group of individuals that is comprised of: ten consumers or parents/guardians of consumers, one representative of Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services, one independent living representative, one representative of a Workforce Investment Board, one representative of the Tennessee Division of Special Education, one representative of the Disability Law & Advocacy Center of Tennessee, Inc., one representative of Tennessee Senate and one representative of the Tennessee House of Representatives.

While the Council is a requirement of the Act, the Department of Human Services and TTAP believe that consumer input is extremely valuable to ensure that representatives from various stakeholder groups have an opportunity to participate in, evaluate the effectiveness of and provide feedback about all TTAP programs. In fact, TTAP has facilitated consumer feedback in many different forms since its inception as it has continued to strive for excellence in providing services and devices to individuals who have disabilities and those whose support them.

3.2 <u>Structure and Operation of the Advisory Council</u> – Describe the structure and operations of the Advisory Council.

The purpose of the Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP) Statewide Advisory Council is to:

1. Provide guidance to TTAP for the development, evaluation and expansion of a statewide consumer responsive system for delivering assistive technology devices and services;
2. Provide guidance and encouragement to state agencies, businesses, industry, and local planning and administrative entities in the use of assistive technology devices and services by employees and constituents;
3. Assist program staff in developing and implementing a state plan to guide the project's activities.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of TTAP's activities.
5. Establish a process and monitor the progress of measurable goals set forth by TTAP in its state plan.

The voting membership of the Council consists of seventeen (17) members, the majority (51%) of whom are persons who use assistive technology or the parent/guardian of a

person who use assistive technology. The remainder of the Council members are representatives of agencies who hold a stake in providing assistive technology devices and related services. Members of the Council are appointed by the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

For the creation of the Council, consumer members were appointed to staggered terms — either two (2) or three (3) years — to avoid the expiration of the entire Council at the same time. All members appointed after the creation of the Council will be appointed to a three (3) year term with the option of being re-appointed for a second three (3) year term. A member will serve until his or her replacement has been appointed. In no event will a member serve more than six (6) consecutive years.

The officers of the Council are Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The term of office runs concurrently with the state fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30. The officers are elected from among the consumer members, for a term of one year. The election is conducted during the last meeting of the fiscal year. Selection of officers may be by voice or by secret ballot with the approval of the majority vote of the members present. The results of the vote will be announced and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

The duties of the Chairperson are to: develop meeting agendas in consultation with the TTAP Executive Director or his/her designee, chair all meetings of the Council, chair all meetings of the Executive Committee, appoint members of committees, establish and appoint members to workgroups. The duties of the Vice-Chairperson are to: chair meetings in the absence of the Chairperson, succeed to the position of Chairperson, if the Chairperson can no longer serve, become the chairperson in the succeeding year and serve as chair of the planning committee. TTAP staff will serve as the secretary and recorder during all scheduled Council meetings. The committee chairperson will appoint a committee secretary.

The Representatives to the Executive Committee will be elected for staggered two-year terms. The Executive Committee will consist of a majority of consumer members and include: The immediate past Chairperson, the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and one governmental representative from the Council. The TTAP Executive Director will serve as a non voting member of the Executive Committee.

In addition to the Executive Committee, the Council has three standing committees to conduct Council business. Those committees are: Development Committee, Planning Committee and Consumer Resources Committee. The purpose of the Development Committee is to research funding resources and new ways that TTAP can achieve its mission and present ideas to the Planning Committee for further action. The purpose of the Planning Committee is to develop and maintain a state plan based on consumer input and collaboration from the Council and TTAP staff. The purpose of the Consumer Resources Committee is to develop strategies based on consumer input and collaboration from the Council and project staff for increasing the availability and acquisition of AT devices and services.

The State Advisory Council meets at least four times each year, two of which may be by teleconference by video/web conference and other electronic means as appropriate to effectively conduct Council business. TTAP staff provides funding and administrative support to the Council. Members of the Council are not compensated for their service. However, all meeting materials and travel related expenses are funded by TTAP and in accordance with all federal and state policies governing such expenses. Every effort will be made to make reasonable accommodations for members to fully participate in all meetings and other activities of the Council.

Council activities are guided by Council adopted bylaws. All meetings will be conducted with parliamentary procedures set forth in Robert's Rules of Order and open to the public in accordance with the Tennessee Public Meeting Act. The general public will be offered an opportunity to address the Council at each meeting. In addition, approved meeting minutes are made available on TTAP's official website and in an alternative format when requested. While the Council is advisory in nature and does not have oversight authority, any motions passed for recommendation or action will be forwarded to TTAP staff for due consideration and possible action to ensure consumer involvement and direction in TTAP's activities.

State: ___TENNESSEE___

Attachment 4: Measurable Goals

A data collection system was not available to establish a baseline for measurable goals. However, once a baseline is established, the state will develop long-term and short-term measurable goals in year two and amend the plan as applicable.

4.1 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Education

- Long-term goal:

  o Short-term goal for Year 3:

  o Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.

  o Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.2 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:

  o Short-term goal for Year 3:

  o Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for employment purposes as a result of the assistance they received.

  o Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.3 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:

  o Short-term goal for Year 3:

  o Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for community living as a result of the assistance they received.

  o Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.4 Goal for Improving Access to IT and Telecommunications

- Long-term goal:

    o Short-term goal for Year 3:

    o Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service that meets an IT/telecommunications need as a result of the assistance they received.

    o Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.5 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Education

- Long-term goal:

    o Short-term goal for Year 3:

    o Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

    o Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.6 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:

    o Short-term goal for Year 3:

    o Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for employment purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

    o Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.7 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:

- o   Short-term goal for Year 3:

- o   Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for community living purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

- o   Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

Attachment 5: State-level Activities

5.1 State Financing Activities – Describe how the State will implement State financing activities as described in section 4(e)(2)(A) of the AT Act.

TTAP has chosen not to conduct an alternative financing program (AFP) because of a lack of human and financial resources. A bill to create a study committee appointed by Tennessee General Assembly to study the feasibility of an alternative financing program (AFP) for assistive technology was not introduced as expected. Therefore, a feasibility study for the creation and operation of an alternative financing program was not conducted.

Staffing and other organizational challenges were experienced by organizations developing a cooperative buying program for Tennessee. Those barriers have slowed development and have not presented appropriate opportunities for collaboration with TTAP. Therefore, no collaboration of any significance has occurred with a Tennessee buying cooperative during the first year of the plan.

Because of these unresolved issues, lack of adequate human and financial resources and other barriers related to creating and sustaining alternative financing programs in Tennessee, TTAP has chosen not to conduct any state financing activities as allowed by the state flexibly provisions of the AT Act and this State Plan. (see Attachment 7).

TTAP will continue to monitor opportunities and resources and will amend this plan as appropriate.

5.2   Device Reutilization Program – Describe how the State will implement a device reutilization program as described in section 4(e)(2)(B) of the Act.

In order to ensure that the limited available resources are used in the most effective, efficient manner possible, TTAP and the contracted centers will both increase current capacity and develop partnerships with other parties to increase their capacity to reutilize technology. These two strategies that both increase capacity as well as develop public-private partnerships will not only allow for better usage of technology, but will also be yet another set of resources to offer technology, free or at low cost, to more individuals and families statewide. Because devices are provided to anyone who applies without any economic or other eligibility requirements, this program will increase acquisition of devices.

A device reutilization program gives new life to older yet usable technology thereby increasing the impact of limited resources in Tennessee. Starting with the first year and continuing through years two and three, TTAP will provide funding, oversight and serve as one intake point for the TTAP Reutilization Program to operate as a statewide program through the network of the technology centers and a partner organization. Each technology center and our partner organization will refurbish usable, yet older used devices. Those devices will be stored at each site for easy local access. Specific activities will include: refurbishing computers, peripherals, mice, keyboards, switches and other adaptive

hardware; installing operating system and freeware/open source anti spyware, antivirus and firewalls; teaching consumers how to use the software and utilizing the accessibility features in Microsoft products and refurbishing mobility devices and aids for daily living. The devices are then made available at very low or no cost to anyone who needs them by contacting one of the technology centers or our partner organization. The device is then made available either by customer pick-up at the local site or delivery if required and pre-arranged in advance.

By devoting both resources and staff expertise to outreach, customer consultation and intake for the partnering organizations, the technology center staffs are providing a much broader service to the citizens of Tennessee. As part of a partnership, the centers will also have access to devices that they might not have within their centers. This collaboration diversifies available device types and inventory for both the technology centers and the partnering organizations. These combined efforts and collaboration between various private and public entities will in the end create a more seamless system for delivery of reutilized devices.

In year two of the plan, TTAP will, in coordination with consumers, the Council and our program partners, develop a strategy for the development of web based access to the Reutilization Program. This new intake method will have pictures of available devices and allow for greater access to the program while at the same time reduce staff time in fielding questions about available devices. By year three, if feasible, TTAP will implement this web based model for the program.

TTAP and the technology centers will reutilize devices from a variety of sources including donations, recycling programs, government surplus and devices formerly used in either the Device Loan Program or the Device Demonstration Program. Those reutilized devices will then be made available to individuals and families free of charge. While the program may not meet every need, it is anticipated that this technology, given a second or third life, may meet some needs. Our anecdotal research in talking with families and individuals is that sometimes even the smallest help can have a great impact on people's lives.

TTAP will amend this plan as appropriate to reflect changes as the program further develops to meet the needs of Tennesseans with disabilities and their families.

5.3 Device Loan Program – Describe how the State will implement a device loan program as described in section 4(e)(2)(C) of the Act.

As in the Device Reutilization Program, TTAP provides funding, oversight and serves as one intake point for the TTAP Device Loan Program to operate as a statewide program through the network of the technology centers. Each technology center loans devices to individuals and families regardless of disability type, economic status or geographic location. The loaner devices either serve as a temporary solution until an ordered device has been delivered or allow an individual to try different devices thereby helping individuals and their families make more informed decisions when selecting devices. Those devices are stored at each site for easy local access and made available at very low or no

cost through a check-out system on either a short or long-term basis. The device may then either be picked up at the local site or delivered if required and pre arranged in advance.

Over the next three years, TTAP will both expand the capacity of the contracted technology centers' current device loan programs and develop a more centralized strategy for information and device deployment, return and redeployment. TTAP will also work with center staff to develop a more comprehensive tracking system for both devices and outcomes. While the current system in place at each contracted center has been serving their individual communities and surrounding areas, TTAP and center staff will develop a much more comprehensive device loan program in order to ensure access to the program is statewide and will serve the needs of people who have all types of disabilities of all ages. This system will allow for better sharing of resources and information among the contracted centers and TTAP staff so that they may best meet individual needs.

So that that people may better access the program, TTAP will in conjunction with the centers, work to develop an online database of devices available at each center. Because of the scope and magnitude of the development of such a large system, it is anticipated that this activity will be developed in stages and evaluated as it progresses. That evaluation will allow for modifications to be made as the technology and access to information evolves.

As the loan program expands, TTAP and the centers will seek outside partners to assist with funding and device acquisition. These partners will help to more effectively utilize the limited resources available. In addition to assisting with getting devices, such partners will help to provide more localized access to members of the community. With that local community presence it is hoped that we will be able to reach those who need the technology the most.

Finally, where appropriate, the center staff provides even better service to clients that they serve from the Division of Rehabilitation Services and other agencies by being able to loan devices while the agency processes the request and the client's technology is delivered. This method of more short term loans allows many to start their employment of training much sooner than if they have to wait on technology that is ordered through the division.

TTAP will amend this plan as appropriate.

5.4 Device Demonstration Program – Describe how the State will implement a device demonstration program as described in section 4(e)(2)(D) of the Act.

TTAP and its network of centers make devices available for demonstrations that address a range of communication, mobility, daily living, educational, employment, and other needs. Parents, professionals, and individuals with disabilities who participate in device demonstrations are given an opportunity to learn about the benefits of and differences between varieties of devices to help them make a choice of the best solution for their individual needs.

Demonstrations are offered by the center staffs as a stand alone service or as part of other services. Specifically, demonstrations are conducted in response to individual requests; or

as part of assistance given to an individual to evaluate potential assistive technology solutions in a consultation or assessment process, exhibits, and training activities. They are conducted at the centers; at home, school, and work locations where individuals with disabilities will use the technology; and at conferences, training events, public events.

Each of the five centers employ staff and consultants with expertise in a variety of types of assistive technology who have experience working with individuals with all types of disabilities and of all ages. Throughout the state, special educators, rehabilitation engineers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, information technology specialists, and others with extensive backgrounds in disability and assistive technology are employed or contracted to provide demonstrations.

A typical device demonstration involves the consumer and/or a family member or other interested individuals as well as a specialist from the technology center. That center staff person guides participant through the features of the device, pointing out remarkable features of the device that may be of particular interest to those participating. In addition, staff talk about the pros and cons using a type of device in various situations. Finally, staff allow participants to try the various devices so that they may see personally how the device functions. This one-on-one demonstration model helps consumers make more informed device selections because they have experienced the device for themselves rather than having relied on second hand descriptions or website and catalogue pictures.

Another example of a device demonstration may be if an occupational therapist enters a technology center and requests a demonstration of various switches that she can use in a presentation to doctors in her hospital. A staff person would show her different types of switches, how they can be placed or mounted and how they work with different devices such as an adapted toys or scanning speech generating devices. She demonstrates her knowledge of how to use these devices for her presentation and at the end or her presentation at the hospital asks those attending to indicate changes in knowledge or skills because of her presentation. The result of this demonstration is a gain in the knowledge of medical doctors who can recommend or prescribe AT devices by demonstrating the device to someone who then shares their new found knowledge with others.

Over the next three years, by taking the steps described below, TTAP will expand the capacity of the contracted technology center's current device demonstration resources and programs. While the current system in place at each contracted center has been serving their individual communities and surrounding areas, TTAP and center staff will develop a much more comprehensive device demonstration program in order to ensure access to the program is statewide and will serve the needs of people who have all types of disabilities of all ages. This system will allow for better sharing of demonstration technology, resources and information among the contracted centers and TTAP staff so that they may best meet individual needs.

Additional technology devices will be acquired with TTAP funding expressly for demonstrations. Outside partners will also be sought to assist with funding device acquisitions for use in demonstrations. Device centers will be utilized for both device loans and demonstrations to make maximum use of limited resources. A centralized strategy will

be developed for increased and improved sharing of devices among centers to ensure needed devices are available statewide for demonstrations instead of relying only on regional resources.

To improve access to the program, TTAP in conjunction with the centers will develop an online database of devices that may be available at each center for demonstration. The demonstration services available from the centers and information on how to request them will be explained. The system may be designed to feature devices, and give consumers a way to request either a loan or demonstration service. It is anticipated that this activity will be developed in stages and evaluated as it progresses to allow for modifications as the technology and access to information evolves. In addition to the database, TTAP and each center maintain toll free phone lines, email addresses, and web sites through which individuals can learn about and request demonstration services.

TTAP and center staffs, with advice from the State Advisory Committee members, will explore the feasibility of expanding a pilot on-line virtual assistive technology device demonstration resource.   This includes short video demonstrations of devices. Development of this resource may be more challenging if an accompanying outcome feedback system cannot be successfully implemented to determine if individuals who use this resource to see demonstrations make informed decisions about an assistive technology device or service.

Along with the development of this demonstration resource, TTAP, in coordination with center staff will seek to develop a means for tracking feedback relative to demonstrated outcomes of the program including the ability of individuals who see demonstrations to make an informed decision about an assistive technology device or service.
The centralized systems to be developed for increased and improved sharing of devices among centers will ensure that a variety of devices from the entire state device inventory are available at each center when needed for specific individuals or needs.

TTAP will amend this plan as appropriate to reflect changes as the program further develops to meet the needs of Tennesseans with disabilities and their families.

Attachment 6: Comparable Support

6.1 <u>Source and Amount of Support</u> – Identify the State-level activity for which there is comparable support, the source of this support, the amount of the support, and the Federal fiscal year for which this support is being provided.

Not Applicable

6.2 <u>Comparability</u> -- Demonstrate that this support is comparable in terms of funding and that the activities are comparable in terms of scope.

Not Applicable

6.3 <u>Coordination and Collaboration</u> – Describe how the State will coordinate activities and collaborate with the appropriate entity, if the comparable funds are provided to, or the activities are conducted by, an entity other than the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity.

Not Applicable

Attachment 7: State Flexibility

7.1 <u>Activity</u> - Identify each State-level activity the State is choosing not to carry out.

TTAP is choosing not to conduct any state financing activities because of a lack of human and financial resources.

TTAP began the research and development of an AFP three years ago. During that process TTAP participated in a collaboration of various stake holders from the disability community led by a consultant from the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) to develop a model for an AFP. That model included partnering with a not for profit organization, a financial institution and the Centers for Independent Living. While the six months of development were very productive and valuable and despite limited interest, it was ultimately determined that were not adequate resources available to create and sustaining a viable alternative financing program in Tennessee.

7.2   <u>Maintenance of Statewideness and Comprehensiveness</u> – Demonstrate that the Statewide AT Program will continue to be comprehensive without conducting this activity.

Despite choosing not to conduct an alternative financing program, Tennesseans and their families have access to a comprehensive network of 5 assistive technology centers that in conjunction with TTAP operate device reutilization, device loan and device demonstration programs (described in 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 of this plan) that are accessible to individuals with disabilities in their families regardless of geographic location within Tennessee, socioeconomic status or type of disability. These programs are specifically designed to increase the access and acquisition of assistive technology devices for all individuals with disabilities regardless of age who resides anywhere in the State of Tennessee. The devices provided in these programs enable individuals with disabilities to maintain or increase their level of independence regardless of the area for which the device will be used including: employment, education, telecommunications or community living.

In particular, the device loan and device demonstration programs provide unmatched access to assistive technology devices. With the device loan program, individuals with disabilities and their family members have increased access to the newer devices with little or no expense. Devices may be checked out for long or short term loans. The device demonstration program allows individuals to see an array of devices and try them out before making a decision about whether it is the appropriate device to address their needs.

The device reutilization program provides free assistive technology devices to Tennesseans. This program is specifically designed to provide older yet usable assistive technology to those individuals who may not have any other option to obtain such technology.

These programs alone have proven to be an irreplaceable assets to many individuals with disabilities who find themselves in a position where they believe they have nowhere else to turn to obtain assistive technology devices.

7.3   Achievement of Measurable Goals - Demonstrate that the State can reach its measurable education goals, employment goals, telecommunications and information technology goals, and community living goals without conducting such activities.

In year two TTAP will employ a full-time funding specialist. The funding specialist will focus on creating a database of funding resources available to individuals and their families, provide technical assistance about local resources to the contracted technology centers, inform consumers on eligibility and application requirements for various funding resources and serve as the state's resource and knowledge base for funding options for assistive technology.

Additionally, the funding specialist will develop relationships with various funding providers for assistive technology devices in the areas of employment, education, telecommunications and community living. As a partner, the funding specialist will provide technical assistance and guidance to those resources as they review, change and develop policies that affect individuals who are applying for their services. Thus, this partnership will lead to better coordinated and more efficient funding systems with the ultimate goal of increasing acquisition of assistive technology.

Finally, as a resource to consumers, the funding specialist will be available to answer funding related questions by e-mail, surface mail and telephone. As part of their resource material development, the funding specialist will also compile and provide printed and electronic material to consumers. This material will be specifically designed to educate and inform individuals with disabilities about various funding resources, eligibility criteria, application processes and appeal procedures. This specialized emphasis on funding will help to ensure that individuals with disabilities are more educated about and have better access to a complex and sometimes difficult to navigate funding system in Tennessee.

7.4   Coordination and Collaboration – Describe how the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity will coordinate activities and collaborate with entities in the State that do conduct this activity, if the State chooses not to conduct this activity because another entity already conducts it.

There are no other organizations in Tennessee conducting state financing activities similar to those required under the AT Act.

8.1 Training and Technical Assistance Activities – Describe how the State will provide training and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals from local settings statewide, including representatives of State and local educational agencies, other State and local agencies, early intervention programs, adult service programs, hospitals and other health care facilities, institutions of higher education and businesses as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(i) of the AT Act.

The staff at the technology centers provides comprehensive training and technical assistance to individuals, families and others in many different ways including workshops and training on new, developing and emerging technology to educators, individuals with disabilities, families, rehabilitation counselors, seniors, youth and other professionals and by teaching college classes on assistive technology.

Technology centers have very knowledgeable and highly trained professional staffs that include certified rehabilitation counselors, educators, rehabilitation engineers and therapists. Because of that, individual center staff on a routine basis either teaches a full class during a semester or summer term, or is invited to lecture on assistive technology. The time devoted to those mostly evening classes is either donated or offset as part of their training activities. This venue for educating young professionals is a valuable tool for increasing capacity of professionals in device evaluation and delivery as they enter their field of choice. Even if that field is not disability related, that exposure to assistive technology may have an impact on their lives or the lives of family and friends.

So that those who use or support those who either use or may benefit from assistive technology have the most comprehensive information and training on both current and emerging technologies, centers provide community based workshops and training. The workshops are held in places and times that are most appropriate for participants and in environments that are conducive for learning. In order to assure consistency in content and delivery across the state, TTAP and the technology centers seek input from the State Advisory Council to evaluate workshop format, focus and curriculum annually.

Training/Technical Assistance

In order to ensure that local communities receive the types of training that meet their unique needs, technology centers develop the training based on community feedback and anticipated audiences. Therefore the training sometimes varies across the state. Some of the modules developed and delivered during year one include:

⇒ AAC Training for Vendor Specific Devices:
   A workshop designed for professionals/students, caregivers and users on accessing and using vendor specific communications device. Participants are introduce to various speech generating devices as well as the basic operation and programming procedures for those devices and how to promote language development through the language program.

⇒ Diversity Training on Interacting with Persons Who Use AAC:

This workshop is designed for professionals/students, caregivers, and others who interact with people who use augmentative or alternative communications devices. Participants learn how to communicate effectively with devices users as well as the differences in communications methods.

⇒ Assistive Technology for Older Populations:
This training module and accompanying workbook are designed to enable seniors with disabilities, their families and service providers (1) identify appropriate types of technology that will help them in community transition; (2) identify funding sources for the technology they use; (3) identify related community or state-wide resources; and (4) identify sources of plans or templates for making simple technology modifications in the home that support independent living.

⇒ Orientation to Assistive Technology:
This training is presented in small or large group settings to present an orientation to assistive technology services offered by technology centers. By using AT devices in conjunction with success stories of AT users, professionals, consumers and members of the general public not only learn about how the devices operate, they more importantly gain a better understanding of the impact that the tools have on independence. Such orientations are presented to students, teachers, local business professionals, parents of individuals with disabilities, families and rehabilitation professionals.

⇒ Assistive Technology Training to School Teachers:
These trainings are developed for educators and often presented at a local school as an in-service training session for their teachers and other educators on AT topics specifically related to education. The goal of this type of training is to familiarize educations not only with various types of technology available to students, but also methods that they may use to integrate that technology into the classroom.

⇒ Toy Adaptation Workshops:
This workshop is designed for professionals/students, caregivers and parents of children with disabilities who use switches to activate devices and toys. Participants learn how to adapt different types of toys (plush, battery interrupt, and circuit board) in addition to learning which toys are appropriate for adaptations and how to make simple adaptations to everyday items.

To expand knowledge and skills to others, particularly parents and service providers who live in rural areas or provide services to people who live in rural areas, a "train-the-trainer" model is used for group workshops when appropriate. This model also includes opportunities to demonstrate newly learned skills in the context in which assistive technology devices will be used (such as home, school, day care, hospital, nursing home, or business).

Transition

In addition to the training related to transition mentioned above, in year two, the train-the-trainer model will be developed further to better prepare individuals who have disabilities that are transitioning from one domain of life to another. TTAP and technology center staff work with organizations that support individuals who have disabilities as they transition from one domain of life to another. Specifically, TTAP and technology center staffs assist organizational staff and volunteers to understand better the different types of technology, resources for purchasing technology and how utilizing the technology can serve as a tool for success. Those individuals then can teach others about technology and its availability to serve as a tool for successfully meeting their goals. By training people to train others who support those who are transitioning from one phase of life to another will ultimately increase awareness about, access to and the acquisition of assistive technology devices and services thereby making the transition much more fluid and successful.

8.2 Public Awareness Activities – Describe how the State will provide information to targeted individuals and entities relating to the availability, benefits, appropriateness, and costs of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(ii) of the AT Act.

TTAP and the technology centers will help inform people with disabilities and their families about assistive technology devices and services using various methods. Those methods will include TTAP and center newsletters, websites & listservs, presentations and using the mainstream media.

In order to keep constituents and the general public up to date on the latest activities of TTAP and the centers as well as state of the art information about assistive technology centers, the centers publish a newsletter at least by annually. The center newsletters serve as a community outreach and information tools through which people with and without disabilities may have a glimpse into the possibilities of assistive technology. Filled with stories about the usage of technology as tool for empowerment, the newsletters, distributed in both accessible paper and electronic formats, also help educate Tennesseans about the availability of devices and unique ways that those devices are meeting individuals' needs.

TTAP and the technology centers maintain an interconnected network of websites. The websites, linked to each other both inform visitors about assistive technology but will also serve as a vital resource for both statewide and localized information about assistive technology. TTAP's website http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/ttap_index.htm is the portal for tying the network together. As the technology and systems develop for the Device Loan and Reutilization programs, the TTAP and center websites is a central focus for cyber access to these programs. As an entry point, individuals and families have access to more information about the devices in the respective programs and learn about how they may access them.

 Staffs from both the technology centers and TTAP present at conferences, meetings, health fairs and other appropriate venues on assistive technology and its availability. In conjunction with the Device Demonstration Program, staff use various presentation

methods to help educate individuals, families, professionals and others about where and how to obtain devices, their use and potential impact on the independence of those who experience disabilities. Through these presentations, people from all walks of life regardless of geographic location or profession will likely have an opportunity to learn about, experience and ultimately obtain these tools of independence.

Another method of public awareness is the utilization of the general print and electronic media. Staff at the technology centers work with local media to present the positive and sometimes profound impact that low and high tech assistive technology has for its users in their every day life. As a partner, the technology centers help the media better understand the technology and the benefits of the technology on people everyday. That better understanding will not only impact the individual reporter's view of the possibilities that technology has, but will serve the greater community in opening doors of opportunity to those who use technology to live, work and play in that community.

Finally, to ensure that individuals with disabilities, families, professionals and members of the public have the most up-to-date and accurate information possible about assistive technology and methods by which that technology may be obtained, TTAP and the centers offer a statewide network of information and referral. Users of AT and others may access the information and referral system in a variety of ways including contacting their local technology center by phone, email or through the center's website or by contacting TTAP's state office using the same contact methods. As part of the information and referral process, consumers are provided with specific and individualized information about local, state and national resources for acquiring and funding of assistive technology. Beginning in year two, TTAP will add a Funding Specialist as part of the information and referral network. The TTAP Funding Specialist will be responsible for providing more in-depth information and guidance to those that call about various local, state and national funding resources for assistive technology as well as serve as the state's expert on funding resources and the process and eligibility requirements for those resources.

8.3 Coordination and Collaboration – Describe how the State will coordinate activities among public and private entities that are responsible for policies, procedures, or funding for the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services to individuals with disabilities, service providers, and others to improve access to assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(iii) of the AT Act.

TTAP staff serves as a resource to those entities that are charged with serving the needs of those with disabilities and their families. In that role, TTAP has the ability to ensure that assistive technology information that those policymakers has is accurate, timely, useful and appropriate as those bodies go about the business of serving their constituents. In addition, where appropriate, staff serves on the boards and commissions of the organizations and agencies who directly impact service delivery. As a member of the advisory or oversight bodies, staff not only has an opportunity to present information and be a resource, but staff will be a participant in the decision making process, thereby ensuring that assistive technology does not get lost in the discussions.

Finally, the technology centers, when appropriate, serve similar roles of resource and participation on local organizations boards and committees. This local and statewide approach to collaboration and coordination helps to make certain that at all levels assistive technology is not only an item for discussion, but a real consideration thereby increasing the availability and access to assistive technology by those of all ages, background, and type of disability regardless of geographic location within the state.

During year one, TTAP and technology center staff collaborated and coordinated with many different organizations including:

⇒ University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Education Department
⇒ Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Education, Assistive Technology Department
⇒ University of Tennessee at Martin Infant Stimulation Center
⇒ Madison County Tennessee Interagency Council
⇒ University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, AgrAbility Project
⇒ Tennessee Disability Coalition
⇒ Vanderbilt University, Kennedy Center for Human Development
⇒ East Tennessee Council on Aging and Disability
⇒ Shelby County, Tennessee Public Library
⇒ West Tennessee RISE (Restricting for and Inclusive School Environment) Project
⇒ Tennessee Council for Exceptional Children
⇒ Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability
⇒ Vanderbilt University Medical Center ALS Clinic
⇒ University of Tennessee Boiling Center for Disabilities
⇒ Senior Services of Memphis
⇒ VSArtsTN

These collaboration and coordination activities will continue in year two. In addition, based on the Statewide Advisory Council's guidance, TTAP and technology center staff will continue to evaluate these partnerships as well as identify opportunities for new partnerships.

Attachment 9: Involvement of Public and Private Entities

9.1 <u>Nature and Extent of Resources</u> – Describe the nature and extent of resources that will be committed by public and private collaborators to assist in accomplishing identified goals.

Not Applicable

9.2 <u>Mechanisms to Ensure Coordination</u> - Describe the mechanisms established to ensure coordination of activities and collaboration between the implementing entity, if any, and the State.

Not Applicable

9.3 <u>Involvement of State Advisory Council</u> - Describe the nature and extent of the involvement of the State Advisory Council in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activities carried out through the grant, including setting the measurable goals required in section 4(d)(3).

The TTAP Statewide Advisory Council plays an essential role in assuring that TTAP and the technology centers are meeting the mandate as well as the spirit of the Tech Act while also responding to the needs of local communities across Tennessee. In that role, members of the Council as described in Attachment 3 of the State Plan serve as advisors to the TTAP director as they implement the State Plan.

The Council is the beginning place for the identification of a need for TTAP activities and serve as the starting point for the development of those activities and the methods by which the effectiveness of those activities will be measured. As the "community voice" the Council is an invaluable partner in providing expertise and guidance to the TTAP director to ensure that the needs of the community are met. Once the need is identified, the Council through community input and their various committee activities develops strategies for new and effective systems to serve individuals and their families statewide.

Once the need is identified and the strategy for addressing the need has been developed, the Council once again serves as an advisor to the TTAP director as the activity is implemented. Council members are themselves users of technology devices and services. That consumer perspective, knowledge and personal experience increases the probability of the successful implementation of TTAP activities.

Finally, the Council is responsible for the evaluation of TTAP and technology center activities using methods that they develop for determining activity effectiveness. The evaluation process is all inclusive to ensure that the activities being carried out are effective and responsive to the needs of those who have disabilities and their families. As issues are identified in either the design or implementation of specific activities, the Council works with the TTAP director and members of the disability community to provide guidance in

the development of solutions. If the Council and TTAP director determine that a specific activity is no longer effective; the Council in coordination with the TTAP director will develop a plan for corrective action. That action may include the elimination, creation or revision of an activity.

Attachment 10: State Support

10.1   <u>State Support for State-level Activities</u> – If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State-level activities described in section 4(e)(2).

Not Applicable

10.2   <u>State Support for State Leadership Activities</u> - If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State Leadership activities described in section 4(e)(3), if applicable.

Not Applicable

Attachment 11: Allocation and Utilization of Funds

11.1 <u>Tracking Expenditures</u> – Describe planned procedures for tracking expenditures for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).

TTAP and the technology centers use generally accepted accounting practices to track all grant related expenditures. In addition, the technology centers have developed separate billing codes for State Level and State Leadership Activities under this grant and will code expenditures accordingly. Monthly invoices from the technology centers have developed so that all expenditures for this grant can be accounted for according to areas of activity. It is the responsibility of the TTAP director to monitor and approve reimbursement to the technology centers for grant related expenditures on a monthly basis. As required, a report can be generated to assure that the state is in compliance with the percentages and budget amounts as indicated by the State Plan.

11.2 <u>Proposed Budget Allocations</u> – Attach a budget containing proposed allocations for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).

Please refer to the attached budget.

State: TENNESSEE

Budget Attachment: Tennessee Technology Access Program

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION FY 2006

Estimated Program Expenditures	% of Award	FFY 2006 (whole dollars rounded up)
State Level Activities	70	$242,568
• Device Reutilization Program		$60,856
• Device Loan Program		$90,856
• Device Demonstration Program		$90,856
State Leadership Activities	30	$103,958
• Training and Technical Assistance Activities		$42,920
• Public Awareness Activities		$42,920
• Coordination and Collaboration		$12,920
• Transition	5 (of State Leadership)	$5,198

Total Expenditures		**$346,526**

Expenses for administering the program statewide are included within the State Level and State Leadership Activities above. Those expenses include: a portion of the director's salary & benefits, the salary & benefits of a funding specialist, ½ administrative assistant salary & benefits and Council member and staff travel.

Changes to the above estimates and allocations will be noted in an amendment to this state plan, as required.